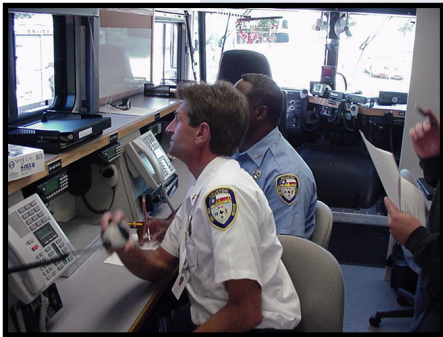




HFD



Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2009-2013

HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Bill White, Mayor

Phil Boriskie, Fire Chief



HFD MISSION STATEMENT

The Houston Fire Department is a professional organization continually seeking opportunities to serve our community through fire prevention, emergency operations, patient care, and excellent customer service.

HFD VISION STATEMENT

We are committed to a superior emergency service organization, which continually improves the quality of service delivered to our customers, the citizens of Houston.

HFD SLOGAN

Courage, Commitment and Compassion

CORE VALUES OF THE DEPARTMENT

SAFETY

The preservation of life remains the number one goal of the HFD beginning with the Responder and extending to the public.

VALOR

Courageously encountering adversity, accepting responsibility for ones actions, and providing respectful and professional conduct due the public and our members.

INTEGRITY

Always doing what is right even when it's difficult or unpopular so that what we do individually and as an organization will stand up to public scrutiny.

EXCELLENCE

Striving for constant improvement to better serve the community and each other.

DEDICATION

Wholly committed to the mission and vision of our department. The faithful observance of duty beckons us to fulfill our obligations professionally and honestly.



HFD SCOPE OF SERVICE

The service provided by the Houston Fire Department has evolved over the years from a heavy emphasis on fighting structure fires to a more prominent role in providing pre-hospital care. In light of the events leading up to and including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the HFD has expanded its role in responding to all types of emergencies, such as hazardous materials incidents, technical rescue events, transportation accidents, utility-related incidents and acts of terrorism. The public demands and expects a courteous and professional response to all types of emergencies and requests for service.

The Houston Fire Department responsibilities includes:

- **Fires – structural and non-structural**
Traditional structural firefighting, vehicle fires, wild land fires, and rescue related to these events.
- **Emergency Medical Services**
The bulk of the demand for services continues to increase in the area of pre-hospital care provided by the Houston Fire Department. The HFD now provides a complete package of Emergency Medical Services, mass casualty management, decontamination, and patient transport.
- **Terrorist Acts – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives**
Issues arising from the recent rise in global terrorism necessitates that HFD personnel have the ability to respond to, and mitigate all acts of terrorism, both domestic and international. The Houston Fire Department has increased its readiness through aggressive planning, training and equipment acquisition.
- **Hazardous Materials Response**
The City of Houston has long been recognized as the “Chemical Capital of the World.” Consequently, the HFD Hazardous Materials Response Team has become a model for fire services around the world. The department continues to expand the capabilities of the HMRT to meet the ever increasing demand for response to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives events.
- **Technical Rescue**
The Technical Rescue Team provides emergency response to incidents such as structural collapse, swift and rapid-rising water, trench rescue, confined space rescue, high angle emergencies, and vehicle extrication.
- **Transportation Incidents – land, air, water, and rail**
The Houston Fire Department responds to emergencies involving all modes of transportation. It works closely with the Port Authority of Houston and the US Coast Guard to provide response to water related incidents. The HFD maintains and provides the Air Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) capability for both of Houston’s major airports – Bush Intercontinental and Hobby.
- **Catastrophic Weather Events – hurricanes, tornadoes, storms, floods and heat**



Hurricanes, thunderstorms and the associated flooding and tornadoes pose an immediate danger to the citizens of this community. The HFD plays a vital role in protecting life and property from the consequences of weather related emergencies.

- **Fire Prevention – inspection, education, enforcement, and code development**
Traditional fire prevention activities, such as inspection and enforcement continue to play a prominent role in protecting the community from fire related losses – life, property, and environment. A greater emphasis on public education and pro-active code development will be sought.
- **Fire Investigation – arson, cause/origin, intelligence, prosecution**
The HFD Arson Division has a long-standing reputation for its efficiency in fire cause and determination. Working jointly with other police agencies and the ATF to bring arsonists to conviction brings to bear an added element of fire prevention. Interaction with other enforcement agencies allows for collective intelligence sharing and enhances safety to our community.
- **Special Event and Dignitary Protection**
Houston is home to past President George H. Bush and more than 46 foreign consulates. The HFD provides planning and response to many special events and dignitary visits. With the added threat of terrorism, special event planning and response takes on a whole new dimension and are no longer routine.



HFD KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Houston Fire Department has identified eight key goal areas. The Strategic Plan includes specific objectives for achieving each of the stated goals. Each objective has a plan of action for completing that objective and ultimately the goal. Further, an annual operating report is completed each year of the strategic plan outlining specific steps to be taken to accomplish the plan of action for that year. The annual operating report will be revised each fiscal year to reflect the current fiscal budget. It is the intent of the Houston Fire Department to have all personnel, collectively and individually contribute to the accomplishment of these goals. Collectively, with a clear vision, we can improve and enhance the service we provide to both our members and the public we have sworn to protect.

GOAL 1.0

Enhance the health and safety of HFD members

GOAL 2.0

Improve fire prevention and public safety awareness

GOAL 3.0

Improve emergency response operations

GOAL 4.0

Strengthen management and leadership skills

GOAL 5.0

Embrace diversity

GOAL 6.0

Ensure funding for operations and acquisitions of capital assets fulfill the needs of the department's personnel and the customer served.

GOAL 7.0

Strengthen and reinforce a positive public perception of the department.

GOAL 8.0

Implement best business practices to increase organizational effectiveness, accountability and communications



GOAL 1.0 ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HFD MEMBERS

Overview

The preservation of life continues to be the highest priority among fire service providers. The Houston Fire Department recognizes that our ability to protect human lives is greatly impacted by the health and safety of our personnel and their ability to provide adequate services. The Department's highest goal is to provide a safe and healthy work environment for its members. The 2005 NFPA Firefighter Fatalities in the U.S. report indicated 46% of the firefighter fatalities were attributed to heart attacks. Of reported injuries, the NFPA estimates that 80,100 firefighter injuries occurred in the line of duty, an increase of 5.6% from 2004. Almost half (48.6%) of the all firefighter injuries occurred during fire ground operations. An estimated 13,325 occurring during other on duty activities, and 12,250 occurred at non-fire emergency incidents. These are clear indications that mandate a pro-active approach to firefighter fitness and safety. The department seeks to instill and model a common philosophy that promotes firefighter safety and health.

Objective 1.1 Improve overall safety of HFD members through department-wide training, incident briefings and debriefings, and post-incident critiques and analysis.

Plan of Action

- VJTF will conduct a series of multiple company drill evolutions to establish departmental standards in fire ground operations and safety and review the results so as to identify company and/or individual deficiencies.
 - Year 1: Sixty-seven multiple company fire evolutions will be conducted focusing on basic fire tactics and post-incident critiques will be performed by district chiefs and training academy staff
 - Years 2-5: Eighty-four multiple company fire evolutions will be conducted each fiscal year focusing on advanced fire tactics- Apartment Fires, High Rise Fires, and Hazardous Materials.

Objective 1.2 Conduct research and development of all safety related issues and continue to provide high quality personal protective equipment to our members.

Plan of Action

- Implement a Tuberculosis (TB) program that entails exposure research and reduction, training and education, and tuberculin screening tests of HFD members.
 - Year 1: No action expected in FY09 due to lack of budget funding.
 - Years 2-5: Pending budget approval, create any positions along with job duties. Implementation of the Tuberculosis (TB) program. Annual Tuberculin screen testing, N95 mask fit-testing, and ongoing training of HFD personnel.
- Implementation of a mechanical stretcher program. The purchase of battery powered hydraulic lift stretchers that have the ability to lift a 700 lb. Patient with the touch of a button, thereby reducing back and strain related injuries.



- Year 1: The addition of 14 more mechanical stretchers to the fleet. Ten stretchers to come from HFD budget. Four other stretchers coming from donation/foundations.
 - Years 2-5: The addition of 60 more mechanical stretchers to the fleet.
- Maintain an adequate level of turnout gear in Quartermaster so that all suppression personnel will have the same kind and style of gear throughout the department. Based on a 6-year life cycle, ensure adequate funding is available to replace 1/6 of all gear each year.
 - Year 1: Maintain inventory and purchase of turnout gear through the use of the SAP program. Purchase 1/6 of total amount in field to provide replacements for worn and contaminated gear. Maintain adequate reserve inventory of all items so that 25% of the members on one shift could be issued gear, in case of a large incident that damages or contaminates currently issued turnout gear.
 - Years 2-5: Evaluate SAP accuracy of inventory control system. Adjust and utilize alternative system if needed. Gear will be evaluated during semi-annual cleaning and repair program. Any gear that requires extensive repairs will be replaced with new gear. Evaluate reserve surplus inventory level maintained in year 1. Adjust as needed. Adjust replacement schedule so that 1/6 of all gear in the field is replace with new gear each year.
- Improve fire ground accountability by acquiring new technology that identifies a member's exact location three dimensionally.
 - Year 1: The current Grace Accountability System needs to be replaced with newer more exact technology to enable the precise location of firefighters in the hazard zone. Research and trials began during FY07 and will continue in FY09 with estimated replacement to be in the later half of FY09.
 - Years 2-5: Once the technology is acquired, department wide training will occur prior to full implementation. After implementation ongoing training will occur at the district level, as part of multi-company drills and as part of other training scenarios. Operations will be evaluated on a continuous basis to determine if the technology or the operating guidelines can be improved upon. Identified improvements to the operational guidelines will be implemented.
- Phase in the addition of Incident Command Technicians (ICT's) to enhance the safety of fire ground operations.
 - Year 1: In April 2008, eleven of 21 ICT's were phased in. However, no funding is available in FY09 for expansion of program.
 - Year 2: Continue to add two ICT's each fiscal year until the phase-in is complete with 21 ICT's total..

Objective 1.3 Reduce the number of HFD vehicle accidents.

Plan of Action



- VJTF will offer a Driver Operator Curriculum (DOC) enabling training in situation awareness, risk analysis and decision making, emergency reaction and avoidance procedures, and conscientious equipment operation.
 - Year 1: Train and State Certify 750 individuals in Driver/Operator curriculum
 - Years 2-5: Train all newly hired Firefighters in Driver/Operator Curriculum (approx. 90 individuals)
- Acquire both heavy and light duty driving simulators. By giving members the opportunity to simulate emergency responses in various conditions and on various apparatus, it decreases the chances of a vehicle accident
 - Year 1: Research the availability of grant funds for this acquisition. Acquire two heavy duty driving simulators.
 - Years 2-5: Acquire two light duty driving simulators.

Objective 1.4 Implement the recommendations of the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiatives as resources allow.

Plan of Action

- Increase the number of HFD members that obtain a yearly well man/women exam. Goal is 90% by 2011.
 - Year 1: Finalize Health Status Questionnaire for members that will identify those who utilize these health care benefits. Continue working with Blue Cross Blue Shield for those benefit utilization numbers. The Questionnaire will also identify health and fitness needs for future health programs and projects.
 - Years 2-5: Continue to collaborate with city health care provider to promote the importance of preventative medical screening through education and electronic communication. Research the availability of grant funds for all members to have complete medical physicals performed on a regular basis.
- Enhance Wellness Guideline goals
 - Year 1: Educate members about Training Heart Rate at Multi-Company Drills and monitor heart rates during evolutions. Obtain baseline fitness data on trainees; conduct re-assessments prior to graduation.
 - Years 2-5: Implement Peer Fitness Trainers as manpower to aid in the fitness assessments, education, and training. Initiate bi-annual fitness assessments on all members. Continue to research and implement program until funding and manpower is acquired.
- Participate in corporate/government programs at local fitness facilities to increase the opportunity to improve the health and fitness of HFD members.
 - Year 1: Continue to distribute a list of fitness facilities that offer discounts to HFD personnel. First circulated in November 2006, this list is updated every six months. Lists will also be published in the Union Periodical and available electronically. Promote city fun walk/runs for department participation via electronic communication and interoffice mail.



- Years 2-5: Research and request grant funding for centralized department fitness facility, as well as repair and replace station fitness equipment for use on duty.

Objective 1.5 Implement the 16 Life Safety Initiatives of the Everyone Goes Home program as resources allow.

Plan of Action

- NFFF Initiative #1- Define and Advocate the need for cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.
 - Year 1: Continue participation in the Near Miss Reporting System.
 - Years 2-5: Continue monitoring effectiveness of participation related to reduction of on-duty near-misses, injuries, and illnesses.
- NFFF Initiative # 11- National standards for emergency response policies and procedures should be developed and championed.
 - Year 1: Administration- Develop a Response to Roadway Emergencies guideline.
 - Years 2-5: Monitor effectiveness of new guideline relating to reduction of on-duty near-misses, injuries, and illnesses at roadway incidents



GOAL 2.0 IMPROVE FIRE PREVENTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY AWARENESS

Overview

The absolute best method of reducing fire fatalities and property loss is through fire prevention and public education initiatives. Code enforcement and fire investigation play a minor role in fire prevention when compared to the success of public fire safety education initiatives. Public fire safety education serves to extend fire prevention and life safety intervention through education by providing educational programs for schools, businesses and civic associations.

Aggressive development and enforcement of the fire codes and ordinances thorough fire investigative techniques will greatly reduce the number of accidental fire incidents. Fire and life safety inspections are required by law as a necessary and integral part of fire code enforcement within our business communities. The public expects enforcement of the fire codes to provide a safe environment in which to live their lives. Likewise, property must be protected from individuals that commit arson and the associated death, property loss, and fraud produced by this crime.

Objective 2.1 Enhance fire safety awareness through an aggressive public education campaign.

Plan of Action

- The Public Affairs division will:
 - target the children and adults of high-risk apartment complexes that have had three or more fire responses, within the complex, in a one-year period.
 - Provide age appropriate fire safety educational programs for school children.
 - Year 1: Public Affairs will continue to canvass fire fatality areas within 48 hours of incident. Efforts include smoke detector install, battery replacement and fire safety literature. Will visit area church following a fatality to schedule a detector distribution day after services to congregation.
 - Years 2-5: Continue canvassing efforts to decrease fire fatalities and increase fire safety awareness in the high risk communities.
- Public Affairs liaisons will conduct speaking engagements educating the community and corporate entities in proper fire prevention and safety procedures.
 - Year 1: Conduct at least 250 presentations at schools, civic clubs, property management companies, and recreational facilities.
 - Years 2-5: Will establish several PowerPoint presentations for topic specific and age specific groups. This will ensure all safety messages, tips and concerns are covered. These presentations will also be available to suppression personnel via HFD intranet.
- Continue smoke detector distribution to low-income, high risk communities with high fire /fatality rates.
 - Year 1: Public Affairs will purchase and install/distribute 6,000 smoke, carbon monoxide, and hearing impaired detectors as outlined above. Public Affairs Mass



Install days and Fire Station Open House events (6 each) will increase number of installs and distributions by 50%

- Years 2-5: Continue to conduct mass smoke detector campaigns targeting high risk, low income families in the Houston area.
- Juvenile Firestopper Program
 - Year 1: The Firestoppers program will continue to serve juveniles with assessment and educational programs, follow up with participants for at least one year with documentation and increase outreach efforts to the Spanish speaking population. (FY09 goal is: 152 referrals from Arson, counselors and parents, 78 classes, 10 referrals for counseling; 14% referrals, 19% classes)
 - Years 2-5: Firestoppers will attempt to increase the number of referrals from counselors and parents by conducting educational presentations in high risk area schools to faculty and parents. These presentations will be available in Spanish and Vietnamese languages as well.

Objective 2.2 Set challenging targets for inspection cycles and ensure compliance of existing codes and ordinances.

Plan of Action

- All LSB inspection teams will meet the minimum standards for the frequency of inspections in all occupancies.
 - Year 1: With the assignment of new fire inspectors to existing teams, frequency of inspections are expected to be on task for FY09.
 - Years 2 – 5: Data collected through the ILMS will be analyzed weekly and monthly and as otherwise required by division administrators to insure all goals and objectives are met.

Objective 2.3 Completely implement the Integrated Land Management System (ILMS) database and information system. Acquire all equipment and personnel required to effectively and efficiently utilize the software program.

Plan of Action

- The LSB is striving to fully implement the ILMS in conjunction with a program for tracking fire prevention permits and inspector's daily activities. These software packages will be used to build a database of business inspection information that may be retrieved later for management review.
 - Year 1: Continue to work together with Public Works to find ways to improve the data system and improve coordination between departments to facilitate a synergistic permit and inspection system capable of providing information that could be used to maximize efficiency and safety in the city of Houston. All roadblocks for full implementation have been removed and plans for the remainder of the project have been approved and fully funded.
 - Years 2-5: Additional programming will be developed and implemented. Training will continue as glitches are solved and revisions made and the final product is rendered.



Objective 2.4 Completely implement the recommendations of the performance audits conducted by Mir, Fox and Rodriquez and by TriData in the Life Safety Bureau.

Plan of Action

- Effective measures have been taken by the LSB to implement all the recommendations. Additional funds are required to implement the remainder of the recommendations.
 - Year 1: Both the quality assurance program and customer satisfaction survey programs will be administered through another division with the Houston Fire Department to insure the integrity of the data collected. Feedback from the programs will be provided for review by LSB administrators.
 - Years 2-5: The programs effectiveness will be evaluated constantly by division administrators. Feedback will be examined and additional training will be provide and policies developed when necessary.

Objective 2.5 Improve and enhance the ability of the Arson division to collect, store and analyze case data and trends with regard to fire cause and determination.

Plan of Action

- The Arson division will implement a new Information and Case Management System and revamp the way the Arson Bureau collects, tracks and stores the records and data we collect during an investigation with the goal being to make our system more current, comprehensive and efficient.
 - Year 1: Install Blade server and train staff in Veripics photography evidence storage and use plus train staff to use the evidence bar-code labeling system. Solve problems integrating FireFiles, Veripics, and our evidence bar-code system.
 - Year 2-5: Monitor efficiency creating reports, monitor quality of photographs taken at fire scenes, and monitor the storage and retrieval of evidence using the bar code system.
- The Arson division will properly staff and redevelop of the Arson Lab.
 - Year 1: Update Arson Lab equipment, and hire and train one civilian lab technician and create at least one senior investigator position and three investigator positions as crime scene technicians.
 - Years 2-5: Purchase an evidence collection response vehicle to respond to moderate and large-scale incidents, thus decreasing the likelihood of issues involving chain-of-custody and spoliation of evidence. The vehicle would be equipped to electronically log and track evidence collected at the scene.



GOAL 3.0 IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE OPERATIONS

Overview

The core mission of the Houston Fire Department is to provide superior emergency services to the citizens of Houston. Often, the first interaction between the public and the Houston Fire Department occurs during a time of personal tragedy for the requestor. The public sector expects and should receive timely, efficient, and superior professional services from our employees. All opportunities to enhance and improve the services we provide should be explored and implemented. The introduction of new technologies coupled with aggressive training and comprehensive professional development of our employees will allow the Houston Fire Department to achieve this goal.

Objective 3.1 Improve emergency response operations through comprehensive, in-depth training.

Plan of Action

- The VJTF will enhance and expand comprehensive yearly training schedules to meet the long-range objective of increasing preparedness through strategic and tactical level training.
 - Year 1: Continue strategic level training through Chief Officer Development program focusing on apartment fires. Continue training newly promoted officers through the Drive Operator Pump program.
 - Years 2-5: Conduct Chief Officer Development course focusing on advanced techniques in high rise events, apartment fires, and Hazardous Material events. Conduct Officer Development training focusing on special incidents in high rise and hazardous material incidents. Train all newly promoted officers on basic fire tactics.
- Encourage and support members that participate in incident management courses outside the HFD.
 - Year 1: Available training will be published through Training Bulletins and departmental e-mail. Members will have the opportunity to enhance their skills, learn about other departments and be allowed time off from the station to attend the classes. Encourage at least 15 members in FY09 to attend Incident Management Courses at the National Fire Academy in Maryland.
 - Years 2-5: Increase members going to NFA by 3% per year to attend advance courses.

Objective 3.2 Evaluate and enhance the Emergency Medical Services delivery system to provide superior EMS service.

Plan of Action



- Implement CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) ventilation program to treat congestive heart failure patients with the intent to reduce morbidity and mortality amongst patients with difficulty breathing.
 - Year 1: Develop program to monitor effectiveness and institute a service contract for repairs and calibration. Purchase a 20% reserve/replacement inventory.
 - Years 2-5: Maintain the inventory of devices including reserves/replacements.
- Participate in local, national or international medical trials to advance emergency medical care. Specifically, partake in an international trial of the AutoPulse device, a mechanical chest compressions device.
 - Year 1: All personnel trained and AutoPulse devices placed on units. Evaluate implementation of RAMPART (seizure) study.
 - Years 2-5: Continue AutoPulse trial through completion. Training and evaluation of RAMPART (seizure) study.
- Enhancement and expansion of the Paramedic Officer Program (POP).
 - Year 1: Retain Engineer/Operator Paramedics in paramedic program with the use of the POP program - Goal to be determined by number of E/O's promoted to Captain.
 - Years 2-5: Retain number of POP officers (with resulting equipment needs) as paramedics continue to promote through the HFD system.

Objective 3.3 Enhance the capability of the HFD to prepare for and respond to Multiple Casualty Incidents (MCI's) and events of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) devices.

Plan of Action

- Implement the Surge Capacity Project which provides for semi-permanent sheltering systems that can be used for treatment areas at 1-3 MCI scenes. These tents can also be used as field hospitals if the local hospitals become overwhelmed.
 - Year 1: Continued training/drills. Possible inclusion of regional personnel on Surge team along with a more identified team mission.
 - Years 2-5: Continued training/drills and maintenance/updating of Surge equipment.
- Design and purchase Disaster/Bariatric Ambulances. These ambulances may be used as a multiple casualty incident (MCI) ambulance capable of transporting 5 supine (back-boarded) patients, in addition to 3 EMS personnel. This unit would double as a bariatric ambulance, pre-equipped with quick-connects to accept the bariatric stretcher, ramps, winch, and accessories to transport an excessively obese (bariatric) patient.
 - Year 1: No action in FY09 due to lack of budget funding.
 - Years 2-5: Pending budget funding, purchase and placement of 3 Disaster/Bariatric ambulances. Then evaluate program for effectiveness.. Possible expansion of the program per results of evaluation.



Objective 3.3 Enhance the capability of the HFD to prepare for and respond to Multiple Casualty Incidents (MCI's) and events of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) devices.

- The installation of active radiological meters for real-time monitoring in selected HFD emergency response units:
 - Year 1: Placement of meters and associated hardware in District Chief, Safety Officer, and Ambulance Supervisor vehicles. Maintenance/calibration of equipment and continual monitoring of program.
 - Years 2-5: Possible movement towards placement of meters/equipment in other HFD response units. Continued maintenance/calibration of equipment. Ongoing monitoring of program.

Objective 3.4 Maximize efficient utilization of resources.

Plan of Action

- Develop and implement the “EMS Tele-Health Nurse Triage” Program aimed at reducing the flow of non-emergency patients to local hospital emergency departments. This program would divert selected low-priority 911 calls triaged by the CAD-based medical dispatch protocol as possible non-emergencies to a 24/7 Tele-Health nurse.
 - Year 1: Divert an established number of low-priority 911 calls. This number will be determined by the Medical Director and Fire Chief.
 - Years 2-5: Continuing evaluation of program results.

Objective 3.5 Explore and identify new technologies to increase efficiency and resource tracking.

Plan of Action

- Develop in-house capacity to utilize Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to provide geographic mapping of HFD data. GIS reporting is intended to relate RMS-type data to a map to provide a better view of resources. GIS Ops Assistance is geared toward providing incident commanders with more situational awareness on the fire ground.

GIS Reporting:

- Year 1: Create GIS reports and dashboards within the FY08 procured WebFOCUS Business Intelligence system; Provide resource planning functionality via FY08 procured Deccan analysis system.
- Years 2-5: Continue to refine reports based on business needs; provide training to end user to allow self-service report creation

GIS Operation Assistance:

- Year 1: Provide situational awareness on the fireground through use of public and City GIS resources on FY08 procured DC laptops
- Years 2-5: Enhance systems with newer/more detailed imagery; create interfaces to external (state and regional) systems



- The Apparatus Design Committee will explore new concepts and designs in vehicles to create a modern fleet of response vehicles.
 - Year 1: Design specifications on future apparatus to meet the current needs of the department. Ensure fiscally responsibility to the city in the selection process of apparatus. Take a proactive approach in reviewing all vendors prior to purchase of new apparatus. Review current vendor for response to warranty service items and quality of apparatus being provided. Review the comprehensive replacement program, including timetable, for all apparatus in the Houston Fire Department.
 - Years 2-5: Utilize ranking criteria developed in Year 1 to select vendors for apparatus purchases that provide the best product, as well as the best after-purchase service. Continue proactive review of all vendors capable of providing apparatus to the Houston Fire Department. Continue to ensure a fiscal responsibility to the city when selecting apparatus for purchase. Review and adjust the comprehensive replacement program, including timetable, for all apparatus in the Houston Fire Department.
- Improve incident management efficiency
 - Year 1: Research available technology to identify and acquire tools that will enable the Incident Commander to more effectively track committed and available resources; access reports, TEAPS, high rise surveys, apartment surveys, etc. on the fire ground
 - Years 2-5: As new informational tools are acquired, the department will insure that members are trained, both initially and annually. Phase-in will depend on the overall cost of technology and the availability of funding. However, it is not the most effective approach for the organization to implement new programs. Consistency in operations is lost using this approach.

Objective 3.6 Reduce HFD response times.

Plan of Action

- Continue to review response times and educate those areas that consistently do not meet HFD response time goals as to the importance of rapid but safe response.
 - Year 1: This will be done through the use of Special Bulletins and informal meetings conducted by the Shift Commanders.
 - Years 2-5: Monitoring for improvement and notification will continue in the subsequent years.
- Emergency Operations will work with EMS and OEC to reduce the response to various incidents, thereby making more apparatus available for subsequent calls for assistance.
 - Year 1: EMS will evaluate statistics and make recommendations for any changes to the response protocols. Emergency Operations, in conjunction with the OEC, will determine if changes can be made to the response protocols.
 - Years 2-5: This will be an on-going evaluation that will build on changes, if any, which are made in previous years.



GOAL 4.0 STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Overview

There is a distinct difference between management and leadership. Both are vital to the success of any organization, and because they are, it is critical to understand the difference. Leadership is defined as having the ability or capacity to lead. It focuses on doing the right things. Management focuses on doing things right. In order to secure success in the efforts of the Houston Fire Department's mission, we must cultivate and educate leaders from within our organization. It is important to mention that leadership is not rank, title, privileges, or money. It is responsibility. All members of this organization should be encouraged to embrace their responsibilities to the City, this department, its members and the citizens we serve.

Effective management, doing things right, will only come through comprehensive training and education of our employees. All members of the Houston Fire Department must accept responsibility for the development of this organization and be encouraged to "do the right things right".

Objective 4.1 Improve personal accountability for member's actions.

Plan of Action

- HFD will ensure that enough members are certified as mediators to operate the HFD Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.
 - Year 1: Staff Services will certify five members as mediators.
 - Years 2-5: Will certify five members per year until objective is achieved.
- Staff Services will evaluate the efficacy of the ADR process on every complaint and/or grievance and will submit the issue(s) to the ADR process when applicable.
 - Year 1: Will evaluate the outcomes of complaints and grievances submitted to the ADR process.
 - Years 2-5: Reevaluate the outcomes of complaints and grievances submitted to the ADR process. Make adjustments and submit future grievances and complaints to the ADR process based on these positive evaluations.

Objective 4.2 Provide leadership and management training to all members

Plan of Action

- The VJTF will enhance and expand comprehensive yearly training schedules to meet the long-range objective of increasing preparedness through strategic and tactical level training.
 - Year 1: Train 60 newly promoted officers through strategic level training program.
 - Years 2-5: Continue to train 60 newly promoted officers through strategic level training program.



- VJTF will implement initiatives to make high quality training and education accessible to all members through advanced degree and training programs.
 - Year 1: Continue to work closely with colleges and universities to promote degree programs. Promote positive public image through image enhancing projects documentary videos.
 - Years 2-5: Establish online information system for any members needing college course information.
- The Life Safety Bureau will implement a Professional Development Program to enrich and enhance management and supervisory skills.
 - Year 1: The LSB will continue to seek qualified resources to provide professional devolvement instruction for LSB supervisory staff.
 - Years 2-5: If necessary, the LSB will develop it's own program for professional development that is adapted to the job descriptions and duties of classified LSB personnel.
- Establish a mentoring program for newly promoted officers
 - Year 1: Continue progress of program development, which is 5currently 50% complete. Implement program in FY09
 - Years 2-5: Continue program for all newly promoted officers.



GOAL 5.0 EMBRACE DIVERSITY

Overview

The management and members of the Houston Fire Department are keenly aware of the importance of creating a winning, balanced workplace in which people of all cultures and backgrounds have an opportunity to succeed. We recognize that diversity creates many opportunities and benefits because it includes all ethnicities, cultures, genders, religious beliefs, lifestyles, and physical challenges. The Houston Fire Department will continue to work toward encouraging all members to embrace and accept the differences within the department, as well as those within the community we serve.

Objective 5.1 Improve workforce diversity through strong recruiting initiatives.

Plan Of Action

- The HFD Recruiting Division will partner with labor groups to maximize minority recruiting.
 - Year 1: Continue use of Public Affairs - PIO and Classified Recruiting (CR) to maximize minority recruiting: Utilize Asian Radio Station by PIO and CR to inform the Asian Community about career opportunities with HFD; assign a Recruiter to visit local ROTC programs and assign a new AA/Black Female Recruiter to visit local high school and college athletic programs to inform female candidates.
 - Years 2-5: Establish a high school boot camp program for the mentorship and recruitment of female and other minority applicants into HFD. This will include a background check up to and including fingerprints; plus the physical training to ensure completion of the physical requirements of the VJTF. The Mentorship Program will be the anchor of the program, allowing HFD employee groups and other interested HFD firefighters the opportunity to develop a mentorship with future members.
- The HFD Recruiting Division will develop a written strategy to reach out and educate minority communities about career opportunities in fire and pre-hospital emergency services.
 - Year 1: Continue using the Talent Acquisition Strategy (TAS) Binders created in FY08 and further breakdown the Minority Binder into: Asian, African-American/Black and Female. This will be accomplished with recently added staff members of an Asian Male and an AA/Black Female Recruiter.
 - Years 2-5: The TAS Binders will serve as a blueprint for Classified Recruiting and Public Affairs - PIO to inform minority communities. They will be periodically updated to concentrate the recruiting efforts on the most successful types of events and advertising. The TAS Binders will be used at all community outings and educational opportunities.



- The HFD Recruiting Division will work closely with Public Affairs to develop a media strategy for recruiting minority applicants.
 - Year 1: Create a CD/DVD for informational purposes. These will be sent out to all school counselors of local high schools, community colleges, fire - EMT academies and universities. The Physical Ability Test video has been recreated and is now being finalized. Once completed by the VJTF, it will be incorporated in the CD/DVD and will be made available for distribution.
 - Years 2-5: The CD/DVD's will be made available for mail out to all viable candidates, be provided to all school and other career counselors and will be made available at all HFD Stations for give away to candidates who might stop and ask for information concerning career opportunities with HFD. This will increase our internal referrals which statistically reflect a higher placement and graduation rate from the VJTF.

Objective 5.2 Create an atmosphere of respect for individual differences and promote the strengths associated within.

Plan of Action

- Promote sensitivity awareness among all classified officers and non-classified non-management employees.
 - Year 1: Schedule contractor-provided, four-hour Sensitivity Training Classes contingent upon budget approval for training 300 personnel: Six classes for 180 classified and four classes non-classified members: 118 district chiefs from suppression and equivalent ranks, 62 senior captains from suppression and equivalent ranks, 120 Non-classified, non-supervisory personnel
 - Years 2-5: FY09, eight senior captain and captain classes, two non-classified classes, FY10, ten captain classes (suppression personnel), FY11, seven captain classes (suppression personnel), FY12, two classes, anyone unavailable for other classes



GOAL 6.0 ENSURE FUNDING FOR OPERATIONS AND ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS FULFILL THE NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PERSONNEL AND THE CUSTOMER SERVED.

Overview

It is vital to the success of the Houston Fire Department to provide adequate funding to support the mission. We must create a budget plan that reflects the vision of the department and supports the activities necessary to achieve its mission and goals. Not only is it important to create an adequate budget process, it is vital to create systems to address preventative maintenance of assets and ensure sufficient operating supplies. All employees must utilize department assets efficiently and effectively while avoiding unnecessary financial impacts.

Objective 6.1 Implement the Mayor's Vision of Financial Management and Accountability.

Plan of Action

- Prepare an annual budget by line item by month.
 - Year 1: Develop seasonal patterns for key budget items; continue to improve the quality of the financial information.
 - Years 2-5: Monitor trends and adjust, as required. Improve month-end closing process with information distribution.
- Prepare an annual forecast which is the same as the budget at the beginning of the fiscal year and which is re-forecast at least quarterly.
 - Year 1: Link the annual operating budget to the forecasting model and test assumptions and cost drivers.
 - Years 2-5: Develop schedule employ the model to reforecast quarterly after the annual operating budget is adopted. Continue to add cost drivers.
- Prepare a Five-Year Forecast accurately reflects the department's funding requirements.
 - Year 1: Interface with City of Houston, Finance and Administration ("F & A") to insure the use of agreed upon cost drivers for key budget line items. Review the Five Year Forecast prepared by F & A and provide feedback where appropriate.
 - Years 2-5: Prepare schedule to update and run the Five Year Forecast and be prepared to share the results with F & A. (Reverse the roles).
- Prepare a monthly reconciliation for the operating budget expenditures to actual operating results.
 - Year 1: Select 10 to 15 budget line items and develop a monthly reconciliation for each line item variance.
 - Years 2-5: Develop a month-end financial reporting package, distribution list and month-end schedule that coincides with the COH schedule.
- Analyze the variances between the operating budget expenditures and the most recent forecast.



- Year 1: Same as the previous action items, except add detailed written explanations to match up with each reconciliation item.
- Years 2-5: Same as the previous action item.

Objective 6.2 Supplies, Equipment, Service Contracts and Capital Improvement

Plan of Action

- Ensure Supply and Quartermaster warehouses have sufficient inventory levels to support ongoing operations, plus a reserve supply to cover emergency needs.
 - Year 1: Develop custom reports that detail annual usage and stock levels for each warehouse. Review levels with product specialist and obtain input for needed emergency back up supplies. Adjust the MRP process to accommodate the additional supply. Develop inventory analysis reports to detail inventory turn rates and dollar values of emergency reserve stock.
 - Years 2-5: Continue to monitor stock outs and adjust stocking levels to reduce stock outs by 10% each year. Twice a year, provide end user specialists with detailed report showing stocking levels, annual usage, and emergency reserve stock. Receive input to adjust levels from end users. Annually, provide report to Command Staff personnel over Warehouse and Supply.
- The Fleet Management Division, Quartermaster and Supply will conduct a robust cycle counts program to ensure their inventory is being processed correctly and efficiently.
 - Year 1: Conduct weekly cycle counts in pre-determined areas; investigate discrepancies through additional counts and managerial investigation; document any changes to system.
 - Years 2-5: Continue to conduct cycle count program based on usage instead of geographical parameters. By the end of the 5 year period we should have a robust cycle count program based on usage, utilizing bar code scanners.
- Lower the dollar amount of the Fleet parts inventory by 20%, while increasing the in-stock position.
 - Year 1: Reduce dollar amount of parts inventory in fleet by 10%. Run and review reports for “big parts room”; determine candidates for removal; annotate removal in G2K system; provide hard copy documentation. Check with other city departments to see if removed items are needed elsewhere in the city. Prepare removed items for public auction; color photos and extensive descriptions. Deliver purchased items to highest bidder. Purchase and stock “need immediately” parts in fleet inventory to ensure shortest turn around time in shop.
 - Years 2-5: Reduce dollar amount of parts inventory in fleet by an additional 10% by the end of 2011. Run and review reports annually for all areas of fleet to determine candidates for parts removal; annotate removal in G2K system (or replacement system); provide hard copy documentation. Prepare removed items for public auction, after other city departments have first choice. Increase purchase of “need immediately” parts to build in-stock inventory to a level of efficiency for current years’ fleet size. By the end of the 5 year plan we should have a more manageable inventory of 1 million dollars or less.



- Ensure adequate fire and EMS protection to the citizens of Houston by addressing the expansion of the city through additional stations and improvements to existing facilities.
 - Year 1: Complete construction of Fire Stations 37 and 90. Design and build Fire Station 84. Design Fire Station 95. Develop a long-term schedule for fire station construction, including property acquisition, station renovation and expansion of existing stations. Develop a plan that addresses the expansion or construct of administrative facilities or support areas. Ensure that all plans remain fiscally responsible to the City of Houston. Ensure that all expenditures can be justified in the CIP budget. Seek alternative sources of funding for facility construction or renovation. Develop a program to ensure contractors uphold and service warranty issues related to construction of facilities.
 - Years 2-5: Complete construction of Fire Stations 37 and 90. Design and construct Fire Station 95. Review schedule of fire station construction, property acquisition, station renovation, and expansion of existing facilities. Revise if needed. Continue to ensure best business practices followed in year 1. Review program of contractor warranty services. Create a set of criteria to include in bid specifications for future construction.

Objective 6.3 Maximize Cost Recovery Efforts and Increase Department Revenues

Plan of Action

- VJTF will explore opportunities to augment funding of Professional Development training activities. Proposed programs/projects will be analyzed to assess the potential revenues from and impacts of alternative fee-for-service policies.
 - Year 1: Increase outside agency training by offering more courses solely, and through partnerships and alliances. Goal is to generate \$80,000.00 revenue
 - Years 2-5: Increase revenue by 5% per year
- The Arson division will be more aggressive in pursuing criminal assets identified during the arrest and prosecution of Arson cases, which can be used to fund the Arson equipment budget.
 - Year 1: Make sure all Investigators know the law governing Criminal Asset Forfeiture and the procedure for seizing such assets.
 - Years 2-5: Constant monitoring of the procedure to ensure Investigators and supervisors are identifying assets that can be forfeited.

Objective 6.4 Maximize potential for external funding.

Plan of Action

- VJTF will actively participate in the grant research process, identifying and tracking needs to ensure adequate funding requests are submitted.
 - Year 1: Submit requests for additional training props and classroom space.



- Years 2-5: Continue to research alternative funding sources for all needs related to implementation of the VJTF regional training facility master plan.



GOAL 7.0 STRENGTHEN AND REINFORCE A POSITIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE DEPARTMENT.

Overview

Perception is everything. If our members and external customers perceive that HFD is well managed and provides superior services, then that is true. An opposite perception of poor management and substandard service is also true. Perceptions are the precursors to attitudes. The Houston Fire Department must have a plan to develop positive perceptions from our members and the people we serve. HFD must pay special attention to our relationship with the media. The media can solidify our standing in the community or destroy the confidence of citizens in the department. There must be a comprehensive plan to maximize positive publicity and reduce negative stories. The primary means of accomplishing this goal is through service excellence. The department must pursue opportunities to showcase the achievements of the department to our members and the public. This not only provides morale enhancements, but it also details the value of an effective fire department pursuing excellence in public safety. The public will support a public sector agency if they believe that superior service is being provided with their tax contributions.

Objective 7.1 Promote international recognition of the HFD from our peers and the public through superior service and accreditation. Promote excellence within the Houston Fire Department and foster pride in our organization from the members, community leaders, and the citizens we serve.

Plan of Action

- VJTF will strengthen existing and build new relationships with public officials and agencies at all government levels by enhancing and expanding the Fire Ops 101 program.
 - Year 1: Provide first hand knowledge of HFD operations to public officials through the Fire Ops 101 Program. Will host three Fire Ops events in FY09.
 - Years 2-5: Expand and enhance Fire Ops 101 program to include community and business leaders. Continue to host three Fire Ops Events per fiscal year.
- The department will conduct an annual assessment in January of each year to maintain Commission on Fire Accreditation International accredited status through 2011.
 - Year 1: Complete third Annual Compliance Report in January 2009 to maintain accredited status. Continue to review bulletins, policies and any ordinances or contracts that may affect accredited status. Maintain current Strategic Plan document.
 - Years 2-5: In 2010 update the Standard of Cover document to reflect data from previous two years. Begin re-accreditation process in the spring of 2010 to prepare for submission of documents and peer assessment site visit in FY11.
- The Arson division will post initial certification training in skills such as Interview and Interrogation, evidence collection, and cause and origin, to increase Investigator credibility and professionalism.
 - Year 1: Continue to send all new and current Investigators to specialized training courses as funding becomes available.



- Years 2-5: The goal should be to have all investigators attain International Association of Arson Investigator (I.A.A.I.) Certified Fire Investigator status. Lobby for certification pay incentive for attaining such certification.
- Promote HFD as a nationally recognized department through TV stations such as History channel and Discovery channel
 - Years 1: Will continue partnership with HTV to produce several PSA recordings of topic specific fire safety messages and division interviews to increase education and awareness to the general public. FY09 Goal is 6 a year
 - Years 2-5: Continue to gain partnerships with local and national media to promote marketing productions of HFD and establishing successful outcomes.

Objective 7.2 Maintain an ISO rating of One

Plan of Action

- The department will conduct a review of the ISO requirements in March of each year and implement necessary action plans to maintain an ISO rating of 1.
 - Year 1: Review ISO class 1 criteria to ensure HFD is still in compliance. Note any deficiencies if found.
 - Years 2-5: Implement plan to correct deficiencies (if found) in order to maintain compliance. Continue to review ISO criteria to ensure HFD will maintain ISO 1 rating.

Objective 7.3 Implement a proactive public information system to provide timely, accurate, and positive information to the community.

Plan of Action

- Public Affairs will continue to produce and distribute vital public safety information to the community through press conferences, press releases, fax, email and the HFD website.
 - Year 1: Continue to focus on three major areas including: Multi-family dwellings, and youth and senior populations with age appropriate public information regarding fire prevention and safety. Target at risk areas distributing fire prevention and educational safety materials and literature. Continue to hold seasonal and scheduled press conferences including annual events (Mass Install/Open House) focusing on fire safety awareness and prevention. FY09 goal: 100 PSAs/press Conferences/Media Alerts/Press Releases and 100,000 website visits; 39% media and 68% visits.
 - Years 2-5: Public Affairs will include live visual demonstrations during press conferences to demonstrate various safety topics that highlight the major causes of fires (Cooking, Candles, Space Heaters, Smoking...) These safety messages and demonstration videos will also be available to view on HFD website.
- Public Affairs will partner with Harris County to complete the development of Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT)



- Year 1: Public Affairs will continue to promote CERT in the Spanish speaking, Vietnamese and African American communities by providing literature at Health Fairs, Career day and other speaking engagements. The FY09 goal is to conduct 48 classes.
- Years 2-5: will continue to partner with Harris County and COH Homeland Security expanding the classes to 50 per year and request HFD funds for instructors.
- HFD Management Analysts will implement best business practices to increase organizational effectiveness, accountability, and communications by creating an executive information system for the HFD Command Staff.
 - Year 1: Will produce monthly HFD Dashboard for Command Staff with pertinent statistical data. Will continue to work with HFD IT and Finance Command to research and refine HFD statistical reporting so that all data leaving HFD is presented in a consistent manner.
 - Year 2-5: Begin analysis of HFD data in earnest to look for performance trends. Work closely with HFD commands to monitor performance and provide assistance in data analysis.



GOAL 8.0 IMPLEMENT BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES TO INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Overview

Best practices are management ideas, which assert that there is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive, or award that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc. The idea is that with proper processes, checks and testing, a process can be rolled out and completed with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. The Houston Fire Department must have a plan to identify those areas of the Command where there are marginal business practices or processes. Once areas in need of improvement are identified, the Department will seek a solution from a number of relative best practices to be recommended to the fire chief. The Department will pursue business practices that will enhance organizational effectiveness, improve financial accountability and continue to open the communications between the various departments.

Objective 8.1 Ensure controls exist in our procedures and processes so that operating and financial data is reasonably accurate and Department assets are safeguarded.

Plan of Action

- Prepare an annual audit plan for the department to insure risks associated with each financial process and procedure are minimized and the financial information is reasonably accurate, assets of the Fire Department are safeguarded and used as intended and authorized, and the department is in compliance with the financial policies and procedures of the City of Houston.
 - Year 1: Examine those areas and commands that require completion prior to the start of remaining commands (i.e. ARFF, IT, etc.)
 - Years 2-5: Develop the “audit process”, schedule review meetings with appropriate area management, monitor implementation progress, etc.
- Establish an Audit Committee to approve the Internal Audit Charter and Annual Plan and to meet regularly to review and approve audit recommendations.
 - Year 1: Prepare a charter and recommend to the fire chief the commencement of the Committee.
 - Years 2-5: Establish a meeting schedule and protocols for receiving reports.

Objective 8.2 Promote an awareness of the need for operational information and communications to accurately budget and forecast operating results of the Department.

Plan of Action

- Coordinate the Annual Operating and Capital Budget schedule to include compilation and review prior to presentation meetings with the fire chief.
 - Year 1: Distribute schedules, requirements and Microsoft Excel workbooks to the executive assistant chiefs.



- Years 2-5: Same as Year 1. Schedule meetings with Command Staff to develop “Lessons Learned” from the previous year budgeting process to improve upon future years.
- Coordinate Quarterly Review meetings promptly after the City’s quarter end close is completed. Review variances from the operating budget to actual operating results with each executive assistant, assistant chiefs and necessary staff.
 - Year 1: Schedule regular quarterly review meetings. Develop financial framework to report significant budget variances and if necessary recommended corrective action.
 - Years 2-5: Develop a standard presentation format. Upgrade personnel with budget analysis experience.
- Develop a budget model with City Finance and Administration and HFD Operations to be used to reforecast the operating budget through out the fiscal year and to prepare a Five Year forecast for the City.
 - Year 1: Work with F & A to develop the cost drivers for an operating budget model. Prepare an analysis of budget line item relationships. Link the cost driver workbook pages to the summary budget page. Test the model for reliability and accuracy.
 - Years 2-5: Prepare schedule to update and run the Five Year Forecast and be prepared to share the results with F & A. (Reverse the roles).

HFD STRATEGIC PLAN



STRATEGIC PLAN MANAGEMENT

In November of 1999, the Houston Fire Department completed and published the first Strategic Plan. That plan was a culmination of efforts from all areas of the department. At every review cycle since that time, leaders from all commands have presented new goals, objectives, and/or plans of action to reflect the vision of the department and offer guidance into the future. In December 2005, the format of the HFD Strategic Plan changed drastically. Goals were simplified to reflect the vision of the entire department, rather than individual commands. Objectives became more detailed in nature. Plans of action provided measurable steps for every year of the Strategic Plan.

In August 2008, the most recent revision cycle began again, and after many months of effort, the Houston Fire Department Strategic Plan for FY 2009-2013 was ready for publication. The plan has been presented to the Mayor and Council and will be distributed to all commands and divisions within the department. Additionally, it will be posted on the HFD website for all to share.

As with any plan, it is of little use unless periodically examined for its effectiveness. Each command will review the Strategic Plan for applicability of the objectives, progress on the plans of action, and needed revisions. Each command is responsible for developing its own method or procedure to monitor and measure its progress as compared to the Strategic Plan. These reviews should be conducted quarterly, with one of those reviews occurring in December, prior to the development of the next fiscal year's budget. It is imperative that strategic plan goals and objectives are considered and incorporated into funding requests of each year's budget, so that plans of action can be accomplished. The final review in August of each year, after the adoption of the annual budget, will serve as a platform for formal revision of the plan and will aid in future fiscal forecasting.

This Strategic Planning Process will allow the Houston Fire Department to safely, effectively, and efficiently progress into the future. It is the vision of the Houston Fire Department to provide a superior emergency service organization, which continually improves the quality of service delivered to our customers, the citizens of Houston.